

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1002
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL TORONTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0202

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: RENE IS HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING HIS PANTS UP WHILE JUGGLING
THREE BALLS

1. QUEBEC'S ECONOMIC SUMMIT OPENED MAY 24 AT "POINTE-AU-PIC,"
A SMALL SUMMER RESORT SOME 100 MILES EAST OF QUEBEC CITY.
ATMOSPHERE AT MEETINGS WAS INAUSPICIOUS WITH LEADERS OF MILITANT
TRADE UNIONS OPENLY ATTACKING GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADERS
WHILE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES BARELY CONCEALED THEIR HOSTILITY.
LEVESQUE REPORTEDLY IN SOMBER MOOD AS HOPED FOR SOCIAL RECONCIL-
IATION AND SEARCH FOR CONCENSUS SEEMS BE DESOLVING INTO ACRI-
MONIOUS NAME CALLING MATCH. THUSFAR, CEQ'S CHARBONNEAU SEEMS
TO HAVE OUTPACED OTHER CONTENDERS FOR ACERBIC PRIZE WITH HIS
DENUNCIATION OF BUSINESS LEADERS AS "ECONOMIC TERRORISTS."

2. IT WILL BE RECALLED FROM PREVIOUS REPORTING THAT CONFERENCE
WAS CONCEIVED IN EUPHORIA FOLLOWING UNEXPECTED NOVEMBER 15 ELECTION
VICTORY. AT THAT TIME, LEVESQUE AND HIS COLLEAGUES NAIVELY EXPECTED
HONEYMOON OF INDEFINITE DURATION WITH SYMPATHETIC LABOR MOVEMENT.
ALAS, HARSH ECONOMIC REALITIES, COUPLED WITH NEED TO REASSURE
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CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY OF ELECTORATE AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY, HAVE
FORCED PQ TO RESTRAIN GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES AND DELAY SOCIAL
LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES. IDEOLOGICALLY ORIENTED MILITANTS, POWERFUL
IN BOTH CSN AND CEQ LABOR CENTRALS, QUICKLY BECAME DISENCHANTED.
CLEARLY, MANY OF THEM ARE MORE INTERESTED IN CLASS STRUGGLE THAN
IN QUEBEC NATIONALISM. THE HOPED FOR HIATUS IN SOCIAL CONFRONTATION
IS SHOWING SIGNS OF BEING SHORT LIVED. (SEE QUEBEC 0201)

3. ON THE BUSINESS SIDE, THERE IS EQUAL ALIENATION FROM GOVERNMENT AS RESULT OF ITS INEFFECTIVE ATTEMPTS TO ASSUAGE LABOR WITH PROMISES OF ANTI-SCAB LEGISLATION, CLOSED SHOPS AND HIGHER MINIMUM WAGES. MOREOVER, BUSINESS ATTITUDES ARE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THEIR OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED LANGUAGE LAW AND, ABOVE ALL, TO QUEBEC IN
EPXS

NXEGMI IN CONTRAST TO THEIR LABOR COUNTERPARTS, BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES AT CONFERENCE ARE LIKELY TO MAINTAIN OUTWARD DECORUM. NONETHELESS, THEIR ALIENATION FROM PQ GOVERNMENT IS PROBABLY MORE PROFOUND.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN LEVELS OF ANTAGONISM ON ALL SIDES COUPLED WITH GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO PLAY TRADITIONAL MODERATING ROLE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LABOR INTERESTS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE MORE THAN VAGUELY WORDED ATTEMPT AT DEMONSTRATING MOVEMENT TOWARDS CONSENSUS COMING OUT OF CONFERENCE.

THIS WILL BE INTENDED PRIMARILY TO SAVE SOME FACE FOR PQ LEADERS WHO HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH PRESTIGE IN POSITIVE OUTCOME OF CONFERENCE. INDEED, LEVESQUE NOW WILL BE FORTUNATE IF MEETING DOES NOT DETERIORATE INTO SLUGGING MATCH WITH HIMSELF AND HIS MINISTERS RECEIVING MOST OF THE LUMPS. PQ ORGANIZERS ARE GUILTY OF VIOLATING TWO ELEMENTARY BISMARKIAN PRINCIPLES: 1)ECONOMY OF ENEMIES AND 2) KEEPING ENEMIES PUBLICLY SEPARATED UNTIL RECONCILIATION HAS BEEN PRIVATELY ASSURED. AS ANTICIPATED IN OUR EARLIER REPORTING, PQ'S MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR FIRST SIX MONTHS ARE FROM INTRACTABLE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
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AND NECESSITY OF BALANCING SEVERAL GROUPS OF CLIENTS WHOSE INTERESTS ARE RARELY CONGRUENT AND FREQUENTLY ANTITHETIC. (QUEBEC 0031). THUSFAR, THEIR BALANCING ACT HAS BEEN WOBBLY AT BEST. NEXT TEST WILL COME AT PARTY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MONTREAL THIS COMING WEEKEND.
MCNAMARA

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NNN

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